Our Lady of El Pueblito: A Marian Devotion on the Northern Frontier

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In her landmark publication, *Popular Arts of Spanish New Mexico*, E. Boyd discusses the appearance and prominence of Flemish prints in New Spain and references an example that was especially important in nineteenth-century New Mexico.[1] The image, *Franciscan Allegory in Honor of the Immaculate Conception*, was produced in the seventeenth century as an oil sketch by Peter Paul Rubens and engraved by his student, Paul Pontius (Figs. 1-2).[2] The Pontius print traveled to New Spain by the mid-eighteenth century and served as an iconographic source for a Marian icon in Querétaro.[3] Prints of the numinous Mexican object subsequently reached New Mexico and led to further iterations by local artists. This article adds to our knowledge of the Flemish sources, the circulation of the image in New Spain, and the importance of the Querétaro devotion in New Mexico.

An Allegory of the Immaculate Conception, from Flanders to Mexico

In about 1632, Rubens rendered Saint Francis as an Atlas sustaining three globes and the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception. Franciscan friars and Spanish royals appear on either side of Mary and the kneeling saint. The mendicants, led by a trident-wielding Duns Scotus, push the demonic personification of Heresy into the gaping, infernal mouth of Hell. A distinguished Habsburg line (Cardinal Ferdinand, the infant Balthasar Carlos, King Philip IV, and Carlos of Austria) approaches the image of the Queen of Heaven. Above, one chariot holds the deceased Habsburgs—Charles V, Philip II, and Philip III—while the other carries the four cardinal virtues, identified as Justice, Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance. Winged Franciscan charioteers commandeer both vehicles.

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, a tricky and often misunderstood subject, was no minor issue. Until becoming dogma in 1854, it was debated by the most renowned theologians—Duns Scotus was a major Franciscan proponent of the doctrine while the Dominican Thomas Aquinas was a detractor of the Immaculist cause. Like the Franciscans, the Spanish Crown endorsed the view that Saint Anne and Saint Joaquin conceived Mary both miraculously and immaculately. Rubens' oil-sketch touts the joint efforts of friars and royals

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Peter Paul Rubens, Franciscan Allegory of the Immaculate Conception, c. 1632. John G. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia. Photograph by author.

in advancing the religious belief and signals their fervent Marian piety.

Rubens crafted his oil-sketch precisely as a model for the engraving.[4] Pontius, an assistant in the Rubens workshop, closely followed his prototype; the finished print naturally reverses the figures in the oil sketch and includes the artist signatures and Biblical citations. It may be the case that Philip IV, the famed art lover and patron of Rubens, commissioned both oil sketch and engraving.[5] Rubens was a court painter in Spain at about the same time the oil sketch was produced, the Habsburg monarchy regularly commissioned artworks championing the Immaculate Conception, and many of these works specifically flaunt regal support for the contentious doctrine.[6] The presence of the poor man of Assisi and his team of Immaculate defenders reaffirms Habsburg patronage. Not only did the Spanish monarchy coincide with the Franciscan Order in upholding Mary's Immaculate Conception, the royals were dedicated supporters of the friars in others ways as well: Queen Isabella's confessor was a Franciscan, the Franciscan Cardinal Ximénez de Cisneros crowned Charles V King of Spain, Philip II and Philip III were buried in the habit of the Third Order, and the Franciscan Order was selected to lead the Christianization process in the Americas.

The print was intended to illustrate a thesis defending the Marian doctrine, yet the political implications of the composition would be overt to the average seventeenth-century viewer. Spanish art from this period repeatedly associated the virgin's purity with the welfare of the empire and this image was certainly no exception. The top inscription labels the scene an Austro Seraphic Heaven ("Southern angelic heaven"), while the scroll above the eagle chariot warns "God will come from the south."[7] This is followed by the prediction—strategically placed by the mouth of Hell—that "Out of the north an evil shall break forth" and the

imperative "Rise north wind and come south wind."[8] These citations may find their literary sources in Biblical scripture but they are more explicitly referencing the northern ills of Calvin, Luther, and the Dutch Rebellion (1568-1648) and the spiritual salvation that could only come from both Catholic and Spanish allegiance. In the seventeenth century, seventeen provinces of the Netherlands rebelled against the Spanish Empire. Although Spain initially succeeded in suppressing the revolt, the northern provinces were essentially independent and fiercely anti-Spanish by the time that Rubens composed his sketch. The southern Netherlands (modern day Belgium and Northern France)—a "Southern angelic heaven"—remained under Spanish rule but not without difficulty. Set against this political backdrop, the engraving does its best to characterize Spain as pious and the northern region as heretical and its rebellion as religiously condemned ("Out of the north an evil shall break forth"). Mixing politics and Catholic zeal was not just an exercise in Spanish self-identity, it was also the structure by which Spain approached her rivals: the destruction of heresy became inseparable from the crushing of revolt.[9] The personification of Heresy in our Flemish works simultaneously addresses anti-Immaculist, anti-Catholic, and anti-Spanish opinion.

The inclusion of the three spheres might also point to Habsburg politics. Scholars have traditionally seen the spheres as symbolic of the three divisions within the Franciscan Order—one for friars, another for religious women (the Poor Clares), and the third for the laity (the

Paul Pontius, Franciscan Allegory of the Immaculate Conception, engraving, c. 1632-1658. Published in Richard J. Judson and Carl van de Velde, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard. An illustrated catalogue raisonné of the work of Peter Paul Rubens based on the material assembled by the late Ludwig Burchard in twenty-six parts, Bk. 21, fig. 288A (London and Philadelphia: Harvey Miller Publishers and Heyden & Son, Ltd, 1978).

Third Order)—but given the political tenor of the print in general, the iconography might also be linked to Spanish privilege in the old world, new world, and, God willing, the heavenly world.[10] Rulers have appropriated the orb as a symbol of rulership since late antiquity; Rubens himself pictures a Spanish royal with two orbs in an engraving now housed in the Albertina Museum. Thus, although Francis is shown as an Atlas for the Immaculate Conception, the three globes sustained by the saint also signal Habsburg political and religious pretensions—the monarchy's presumed hold and influence on these three worlds.

Mexican Iterations and Appropriations

The Flemish print crossed the Atlantic by the late seventeenth century and led to large polychrome compositions in the Franciscan churches of Puebla and Acatepec.[11] Soon, the iconography was adapted and transformed in a variety of media. In Tlaxcala, the image appears as a stunning estofado sculpture produced for the Chapel of the Third Order; in Ocotlan, the Flemish-inspired design became part of the architectural edifice of the town's famed sanctuary; in a painting from Tecajic, Spanish royals and the assortment of friars were replaced with the two figures of San Juan Capistrano and San Bernardino, missionary heroes for friars in the Americas. Choir book illustrations, baptistery paintings, monastic wall paintings—the appearance of the European iconography in Mexico is both various and variegated.

Whereas Rubens' *Allegory* announced royal and mendicant support for a controversial doctrine while championing Spanish hegemony on religious grounds, the theme's adaptations in New Spain reveal a distinct, localized narrative. Read in a colonial Mexican context, the iconography touts Franciscan missionary achievements—the so-called Spiritual Conquest of Mexico—while arguing for the continued relevance of the Order in the late colonial period. The example found in the arched, colonnaded entry of Ozumba's Franciscan monastery

Maria de Agreda, Saint Francis, and Duns Scotus with the Immaculate Conception, late seventeenth century. Parish church (former Franciscan monastery), porteria detail, Ozumba, Mexico. Photograph by author.

emphasizes this point. This portion of the monastery was likely used as a chapel and, judging from baptismal records, essentially functioned as the area's parish church.[12] This in part would explain the emphasis on the setting's extensive pictorial program composed of five major scenes; included are Pedro de Gante's arrival in 1523, the presence of the famous 12 Franciscan friars, the flagellation of a partially disrobed Hernán Cortés, and the martyrdom of three Tlaxcaletcan boys. What concerns us most is the scene above the doorway: Saint Francis is shown supporting three globes and the Immaculate Conception while Sor Maria Agreda and Duns Scotus pen their famous tracts on either side (Fig. 3).

The nun's comparison to the *doctor subtilis* is far from isolated; the pair also appear on the façade of a Franciscan mission in the Sierra Gorda, the façade of the Franciscan apostolic college in Zacatecas (Guadalupe), and in a painting located in the missionary college in Mexico City (San Fernando).[13] Author of *Mystical City of God*, a multi-volume biography of the Virgin Mary based on divine revelations, the seventeenth-century nun longed to convert natives in the New World and eventually succeeded through 'bilocation.'[14] Although she never left her convent in Spain, her mystical experiences and missionary zeal allowed her to miraculously preach in Texas and New Mexico where she became known as the Lady in Blue. Agreda's renown as recipient of so many astonishing Marian revelations was inseparable from her famed, supernatural voyages to the New World. For late colonial Franciscans, the Spanish mystic was a proto-missionary in the northern reaches of the colony. Naturally, she became an inspirational figure for friars in the Americas—such as Margil de Jesus and Junipero Serra—and symbol of the ongoing missionary enterprise. Her appearance at Ozumba as modern counterpart to the medieval Duns Scotus, and her association with the Franciscan-Marian iconography, transforms the Flemish design: here Marian piety and Immaculist convictions are specifically tied to the American Franciscan missionary project of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Our Lady of el Pueblito, from Querétaro to New Mexico

Our Lady of el Pueblito, a miraculous icon from the outskirts of Querétaro, is similar to many colonial Marian sculptures from the area: made of *pasta de caña* or corn paste, the beautifully rendered Virgin with a calm expression is elegantly draped with a velvet cloak and accented with rich, gold brocade. Yet what sets her apart are the following attributes: a Christ Child stands by her side and the figure of Saint Francis with three spheres supports her base. The child was typically shown at the side of the saint throughout the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth. Today, the child sits on the same celestial plane as the Virgin. The Franciscan friar Hermenegildo Vilaplana, the first historian to publish a devotional history of the icon, tells us that Sebastian Gallegos fabricated both the Virgin and child in 1632.[15] The union is later repeated in his monograph, this time in regards to an ill devotee's petition:

> [Doña María Magdalena Sánchez Colindres] was given no hope by her medics: she instantly petitioned the sacred image and, having succeeded in obtaining a visit by the Christ Child who ordinarily accompanies it…her fever subsided, she immediately felt better and eventually recuperated entirely.[16]

By the time of Vilaplana's writing, the Christological image was imbued with the same

thaumaturgic powers as the Virgin. Not surprisingly, the engraving accompanying his publication displays an icon composed of Virgin, spheres, and child (Fig. 4). Yet despite the 1761 celebration of the sculptural triad, neither child nor saint was part of the original 1632 sculptural group. A 1755 published description of the icon by the Jesuit Juan Antonio de Oviedo and a 1743 official inspection by Esteban Gómez de Acosta, describe and laud only the Virgin Mary at el Pueblito and make no mention of the numinous attachments.[17] The saint, spheres, and child are almost certainly eighteenth-century additions to the seventeenth-century Marian icon, and the Pontius print was likely the inspiration for the accessories.[18]

In 1974, Boyd correctly identified the Rubens design and Pontius print as sources for the Virgin of el Pueblito and the scholar offered some background knowledge on the Querétaro devotion. Yet the following questions remained: How did the Virgin of el Pueblito reach New Mexico? Who promoted the icon and what was the devotion's appeal within a local, New Mexican community?

Boyd was right to suspect that knowledge of the icon reached New Mexico in much the same way the Rubens design reached the New World—through a print. In 1948, Manuel Romero de Terreros cited six known plates based on the Querétaro icon: four from the eighteenth century and two from the nineteenth.[19] Yet Boyd knew of an additional Mexican engraving in the collection of H. Cady Wells in New Mexico (Fig. 5).[20] The author surmises that this copperplate, dated 1776, may have been the model for two retablos by A.J. Santero, both dated 1822 (Fig. 6).[21] A.J. Santero's model, however, was probably the print included in Vilaplana's publication (Fig. 4). Produced by the engraver Antonio Onofre Moreno, the copper print shows the religious icon within a well-delineated architectural frame. An inscription follows the contours of the arch and reads "True Copy of the Miraculous Image of Our Lady of el Pueblito who is venerated *extramuros* from the City of Querétaro."[22] The splendidly dressed Virgin is crowned, holds her hands in prayer, and is seated on a crescent moon. A.J. Santero followed this design and inscription for his own productions; other New Mexican works—an oil-on-tin object in the Spanish Colonial Arts Society Collection for example—adhere to a print included in later editions of Vilaplana's work.[23]

To understand the icon's promotion and appeal in eighteenth-century Querétaro and nineteenth-century New Mexico, it is necessary to understand the Crown's secularization campaigns and the Franciscan Order's endorsement of images and shrines during this late colonial period. In the seventeenth century, the process of transferring economic, religious, and political clout from monastic centers to the secular Church was well underway. This sharp and unforgiving strategy would greatly intensify in the eighteenth century and culminate in the nineteenth.[24] Secularization policies supported the monarchy's intention to centralize and standardize political authority and supervise the clergy more closely. Members of the religious orders, in the words of historian William Taylor, "were far too independent for the regalists' taste."[25] And true enough, Franciscans throughout Mexico fought back: in response to Bishop Palafox's efforts to secularize more than 30 Franciscan churches in Puebla (c. 1641), twelve friars, armed with sticks and knives, caused damage throughout the town of Cholula and violently took possession of the parish church before fleeing with an image of the Virgin.[26] Other friars advised their native congregation to boycott secularized churches and urged the removal of priests. Most impressively, friars Francisco de Ribera and Juan Quijano gathered up six hundred natives in the Toluca region and demolished the church of Saint Peter Calimaya.

Antonio Onofre Moreno, Nuestra Señora del Pueblito, engraving, 1761. Published in Hermenegildo Vilaplana, Histórico y Sagrado Novenario (Mexico: Biblioteca Mexicana, 1761).

Their companion, friar Antonio de Torrijos, confessed that he had also burned a church.[27]

Adding insult to injury, the Franciscan Order's early achievements were also challenged throughout the late colonial period. Although the criticism that the friars were claiming conversion for legions of natives not yet free of idolatry was insinuated by the first provincial council in Mexico City, the charge was repeated most vociferously in the following century by Dominican rivals.[28] As friars were under attack, a colonial cult of images was deepening its roots. Sanctuaries housing popular, miraculous images were quickly becoming chief nodal points of economic and religious influence and authority in Spanish America.[29] Franciscan friars, too, began to actively nominate particular images in their cultural and political strongholds, detailing their histories and emphasizing their popularity in publications bound for mass distribution. Departing from the works of Geronimo de Mendieta, Motolinia, and

Juan de Torquemada, a different kind of Franciscan chronicle began appearing by the end of the seventeenth century—one that not only emphasized the order's illustrious role in the evangelization of the New World, but also delineated the friar's role in the propagation of numerous devotions within a miraculous landscape. The most influential Franciscan text of this type was Agustin de Vetancurt's *Teatro Mexicano* [1697-1698].

The Virgin of el Pueblito was one of many images championed by the Franciscan Order in the eighteenth century. According to Vilaplana, the Franciscan artist and friar Sebastian Gallegos crafted the image in response to the area's return to idolatry. It appeared that native Otomies were congregating at the nearby pre-Hispanic temple mound, known as Cerro Pelón, and allegedly offering gifts of flowers and incense to their idols, crying for the protection and aid of their pagan gods, and dancing at the foot of the man-made shrine. Once Gallegos crafted the sculpture of the Immaculate Conception, the Franciscan guardian installed it at the offensive site. Vilaplana eloquently describes what happened next:

> They began to view her for long periods of time, gazing in suspense...at that portrait of the Queen of Heaven and Earth…Admiring her overwhelming beauty, love entered them through the eyes, seeing and admiring so much loveliness and majesty in that marvelous image that it won't be the first or last time that the eyes are the instruments by which the heart surrenders.[30]

The image successfully reconverted the lapsed Christians and began to perform a series of miraculous feats: bleeding, sweating, healing, and protecting. Previous friars may have baptized and catechized for years, but it was only through the faculty of sight that the Otomi natives were truly able to absorb the faith and convert to Christianity. The point merits its emphasis: the sculpture was prized for its *re*conversion of the community and, indeed, was made in response to fully baptized natives performing illicit Precolumbian rites.[31]

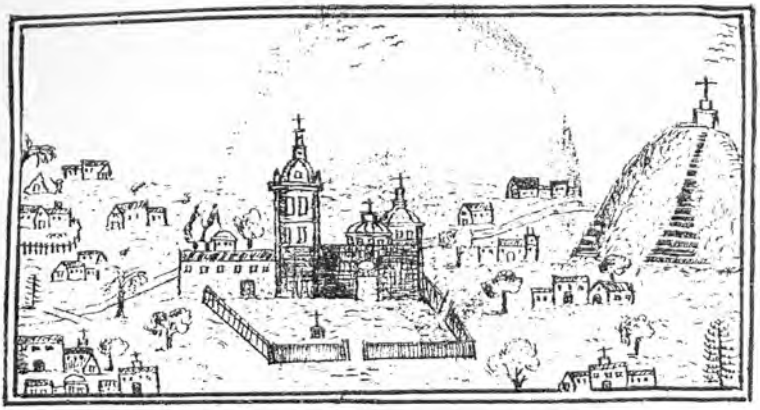
Seventeenth-century sources for the sculpture are not known, so it is impossible to say whether the Marian

Virgin of el Pueblito, engraving, 1776. Former collection of H. Cady Wells, Collection of the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Photograph by author.

image had more than a minimal following during this period.[32] What is certain is that the cult was propelled to new heights in the eighteenth century, a popularity no doubt connected to its added iconography and the arrival of the powerful Franciscan friars of Propaganda Fide in New Spain. The Vatican-licensed congregation established their first apostolic college in Querétaro in 1683 and would subsequently found other missionary colleges.[33] For these enterprising and zealous friars, spiritual reparation, religious renovation, and ethical restitution formed a lexicon aimed at sustaining long-term projects of instauration.[34] The rhetoric of reconversion was essential to the Franciscan enterprise in both city and countryside.[35] The colleges instituted a stricter moral and Christian code within urban centers and built new missions throughout the northern frontier. The College of San Fernando (Mexico City) sent friars to establish the string of missions in Upper California, while the College of Guadalupe (Zacatecas) and Santa Cruz (Querétaro) sent friars to New Mexico and Texas.[36] The conversion of lapsed Christians and the reorganization of a native population within a larger colonial society were presented as on-going efforts, not projects limited to an earlier age.

Promotion of sacred images proved crucial to a buoyant Franciscan ontology: miraculous images reconverted communities, renovated ailing cities, and announced mendicant piety and sanctity. It is no surprise, then, that the newly arrived Franciscan friars of Propaganda Fide enthusiastically endorsed the cult at el Pueblito and proved instrumental to its promotion throughout the viceroyalty. Vilaplana, stationed at the College of Santa Cruz, was the congregation's chief historian and hagiographer. In addition to writing his monograph on the Pueblito icon, he wrote spiritual biographies of Margil de Jesús, San Juan Capistrano, and San Cayetano. When the Spanish Propaganda Fide friar Francisco Ajofrín arrived at the college in 1763, surveying the religious landscape, natural resources, and character of New Spain, Vilaplana gave him a copy of his 1761 panegyric and sent him to el Pueblito to visit the icon, sanctuary, and monastery.[37] Ajofrín was indeed impressed, writing in his travelogue that the small Indian town was "infinitely famous for its Marian icon." He described the image and sanctuary in detail, even including an exterior view of the site (Fig. 7).[38] The panorama displays an extravagant and monumental sanctuary and adjacent monastery surrounded by small religious houses. The shrine beams proudly with its majestic Baroque towers while the Franciscan monastery stands as a humble, horizontal structure with minimal ornamentation. The entire architectural complex has an enclosed atrium with cross. To the right of the sanctuary, we are given a clear view of the Cerro Pelón, site of the miraculous reconversions. Ajofrín's chronicle was the first to cite Vilaplana as chief authority of el Pueblito but certainly not the last.[39]

The link between Propaganda Fide and the Virgin of el Pueblito increased in the nineteenth century, partially due to the icon's endorsement of the royalist cause during the wars of independence. Friars at the college in Querétaro, Mexico City, and Zacatecas were staunch conservatives and eagerly employed the anti-insurgent Virgin del Pueblito in their campaigns. On September 20, 1810, friar Pedro José de Mendizabal appealed to the miraculous sculpture's protection against the "perverse insurgents" and those who "profane sacred images" (his sermon explicitly mentioned the insurgent priest Miguel Hidalgo and the Virgin of Guadalupe).[40] Like the Mendizabal discourse, an 1811 sermon by Miguel Bringas y Encinas, another Propaganda Fide friar, positioned Spain as a chosen nation—the miraculous icons in Zaragoza, Guadalupe, Ocotlan, and el Pueblito were proof that God favored Spanish imperialism—and loyalty to the king demonstrated one's Catholic devotion. In short, the friar defended Spanish



Santuario de Nuestra Señora del Pueblito.

El Pueblito Sanctuary from Francisco de Ajofrin's travelogue, c. 1763, engraving. Published in Diario del Viaje, 2 vols. (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1958-1959).

Anonymous, Our Lady of el Pueblito, 1874. The icon is seen in a landscape that includes the city of Querétaro, rather than the sanctuary at el Pueblito. Collection of the First National Bank, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Photograph by author.

Anonymous, Our Lady of el Pueblito, nineteenth century. Mission Inn and Spa, Riverside, California. Photograph by author.

A.J. Santero, Virgin of el Pueblito, retablo, c. 1822. Wood, gesso, water-based paint. Museum of Spanish Colonial Art, Santa Fe, New Mexico. Photograph courtesy of Andrew Doust.

Anonymous, Our Lady of el Pueblito, nineteenth century. Oil on tin. Published in Behind the Altar: Collection of Paul LeBaron Thiebaud *(Sacramento: California State University, 2005).*

hegemony as much for religious reasons as for political ones (and here we finally find echo of the original Rubens oil-sketch); the insurgents of Spanish America were criminals and heretics, while royalists were devout congregants charged with extirpating the new barbarism. Bringas y Encinas' sermon is illustrated with an engraving that shows the Pueblito Virgin as a *generala*—a sculpture with a sash across its figure and a banner announcing "Long live religion! Long live Spain and Spanish America as one! Long live Ferdinand VII under the protection of Holy Mary! Proclamation by the religious and loyal Querétaro."[41] The author would praise the Pueblito sculpture in no less than four published sermons, and his commitment to both the icon and Spain accompanied him throughout his life and throughout his missionary travels in Arizona and Sonora.[42]

The chief promoters of the Querétaro devotion were not members of the laity but the Franciscans themselves—journeying friars introduced the devotion to the northern regions via texts, prints, and portable paintings. The flow of images in New Mexico seems to have continued once the area became a US territory. One painting of the Pueblito image likely entered the region in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and is now in the collection of the First National Bank of Santa Fe (Fig. 8). Done in a style typical of nineteenth-century central Mexico, the imported object highlights the icon and the surrounding religious landscape: cherubim encircle the Virgin and Christ-Child, Saint Francis looks out at the viewer, and a rich topography reveals the pious city of Querétaro. That the city would serve as backdrop, rather than the sanctuary complex and monastery in el Pueblito (e.g. Fig. 9), reflects the late nineteenth-century regularity in which the object journeyed to Querétaro and remained for extended periods of time. Although this practice occurred throughout the eighteenth century, the custom soared during the independence wars and beyond, ultimately leading to legal disputes between her local and urban devotees.[43] Paintings, engravings, and lithographs from the second half of the nineteenth century typically cite the city of Querétaro, reflecting not just elite support for the miraculous sculpture but the colonial and post-independence polemics of patronage.[44]

Franciscan promotion of the devotion is evident, but one still must question the cult's popularity in its new northern setting. Several retablos (the two by A.J. Santero being the most widely known) and some works on tin have turned up in New Mexico or can be identified with New Mexican workshops (Fig. 10).[45] Local devotion is also evidenced by an alabado. In this hymn, the Pueblito Virgin provides aid during childbirth, plagues, and physical suffering.[46] What is particularly interesting about the music is that it references the thaumaturgic properties of a local image. When disease infects the town, parading the image in religious procession will make the epidemic cease. She is truly a "celestial doctor" the hymn confirms. Like the retablos, the alabado (likely composed in the second half of the nineteenth century) presents evidence of the image's popular following and its incorporation into local paraliturgical practice; that is, the devotion became part of a religiosity that was not entirely monitored or controlled by either mendicant friars or church clergy.

Considering the area canvassed by the Propaganda Fide friars, one expects to find her late colonial image in other areas of the US Southwest. Indeed, several paintings and related bibliographic items have been uncovered in California (e.g. Fig. 9). A rather unusual example is found at Mission San Juan Bautista: the item appears to be a simplified copy of a 1769 exvoto from the Pueblito shrine. The miracle in question—the survival of the Franciscan guardian after violent assault—was officially approved in 1769 and knowledge of it was disseminated

(long after the event) through publications and related engravings.[47] As with the sanctuary exvotos, the California example certified and validated the object's status as a holy image.

Devotion to the Virgin of el Pueblito is still active in Texas, particularly along the Mexican border; the object of devotion, however, tends to be a "true copy" (a "satellite image," to borrow a phrase from William Taylor) and not the icon in Querétaro.[48] Further research will undoubtedly reveal many more paintings and engravings and might also provide clues as to the icon's transformation in these regions. Did Saint Francis come to support other miraculous avocations in New Mexico, as so happened in Xochimilco, Ocotlan, Tecajic, and Zacatecas (Cover illustration)?[49] Was the santero Pedro Antonio Fresquís inspired by the iconic image when he made an enigmatic retablo of a Herculean Saint Francis sustaining a crucifix (Fig. 11)? Perhaps most puzzling, how can we account for the image's appeal and popularity after Mexican Independence (when missions are secularized) and after U.S. Occupation (1846)?[50]

While commendable work has been undertaken to determine the artistic sources for New Mexican artists during the viceregal period, the present project has attempted to move beyond identification and better understand said sources and the process of appropriation and transformation in New Spain and nineteenth-century New Mexico. In the case of the Pueblito Virgin, one can trace its iconography to a Flemish illustration stressing Habsburg piety and royal support for the Immaculist cause. As in Spain, patronage mattered in America: while the Franciscan Order found uses for the Pontius print throughout their Mexican strongholds (particularly Puebla and Tlaxcala), the Querétaro icon was specifically tied to the late colonial missionary concerns of Propaganda Fide friars. Radiating out from their epicenters in Querétaro, Zacatecas, and Mexico City, and establishing missions along the northernmost frontier, friars embarked on their quest to reconvert lapsed Christians and resilient natives. Venturing into a New Mexico in the years following the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, Propaganda Fide missionaries found inspiration and consolation, guidance and purpose, in the reconverting Marian image supported by Saint Francis. The number of devotees grew as local artists appropriated and disseminated the design. As with other examples of Mexican iconography, santeros continue to repeat the image until the present day.

Endnotes

1 E. Boyd, *Popular Arts of Spanish New Mexico* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1974).

2 The Rubens painting is part of the John G. Johnson Collection in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Julius Held, *The Oil Sketches of Peter Paul Rubens: A Critical Catalogue* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 526-528. For discussion of the Pontius print, see Richard Judson and Carl van de Velde, *Book Illustrations and Title Pages*, vols. 21-22 of the *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard*, ed. National Centrum voor de Plastische Kunsten in de XVIde en XVIIde Eeuw (New York: Phaidon, 1968).

3 Clara Bargellini refers to the Rubens oil sketch as an important composition for Latin America, "since its iconography centers on the Spanish Habsburg support of the Franciscan missions." Bargellini, "Painting in Colonial Latin America," in *The Arts in Latin America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 328-329. The most complete study of both oil sketch and print, and their relevance within Latin America, is provided by Cristina Cruz González, "The Circulation of Flemish Iconography in the Mexican Missions and the Creation of a New Visual Narrative, 1630-1830," *Boletin: Journal of the California Mission Studies Association*, vol. 25

(2008): 5-34. More recently, Jaime Cuadriello offers a fascinating study of the "theopolitical" aspects of Immaculist iconography, including the Rubens/Pontius works. Cuadriello, "Theopolitical Visualization," in *Sacred Spain: Art and Belief in the Spanish World* (New Haven: Yale University Press), 120-145.

[4] The importance of an oil sketch to Rubens' creative process is examined by Peter C. Sutton and Marjorie Wieseman, eds. *Drawn by the Brush: Oil Sketches by Peter Paul Rubens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004). See also Michael Jaffe, "Rubens' Sketching in Paint," *Art News*, vol. 54 (1953): 34-37, 64-67.

[5] Jonathan Brown considers Rubens' visit to the Spanish court to be one of the "major events in the history of seventeenth-century Spanish painting." Prior to 1628, few works by Rubens existed in Madrid; by the late 1630s, Philip IV had accumulated the greatest collection of Rubens paintings anywhere at the time. Brown, *Painting in Spain: 1500-1700* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 116; see also Alexander Vergara, *Rubens and his Spanish Patrons* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[6] Suzanne Stratton finds Spanish royal support of the doctrine to be so pervasive in our surviving corpus that she questions the extent of the doctrine's mass-appeal, charging that the vast production of Immaculist art may have simply been an elite effort to advance the party line. Stratton, *The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 71. The work of Anna Coreth challenges the notion that the doctrine was theologically understood by elites only. For example, Austrian Habsburgs made powerful use of it during the Thirty Year War against their Protestant foes, declaring the Immaculist Virgin a "generalissima." The politicized image and the doctrine associated with it in turn become accepted and internalized by peasant communities, thereafter to be displayed as (plebian) identity-markers. Coreth, *Pietas Austriaca: Austrian Religious Practices in the Baroque Era*, trans. William David Bowman (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2004).

[7] *Austroseraphiuum coelum*, or "southern angelic heaven," refers to Christ in the form a six-winged seraph (the source of the saint's stigmata) and to the saint himself, who was labeled an "angel of the Apocalypse" by Saint Bonaventure. "God will come from the south" is taken from Habakkuk (3:3).

[8] Jeremiah (1:14): "Then the Lord said unto me, out of the North an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the Land." "Rise north wind and come south wind" is quoting the Song of Solomon (4:16).

[9] 'Rebels and heretics' was the chosen Spanish label for the insurgent Dutch. John Elliot, *Imperial Spain, 1469-1716* (London: Penguin, 1990), 233.

[10] An interpretation first suggested by L. Van Puyvelde, "Un tableau symbolique de Rubens," *Beitrage fur Georg Swarzenski* (Chicago: H. Regnery, 1951), 185ff.

[11] The Acatepec painting is located in the nave of San Francisco Acatepec. The Puebla painting is in the chapel of the beatified Sebastian de Aparicio in the city's Church of San Francisco. A third colonial Mexican copy is now part of the permanent collection of the National Museum of Mexican Art in Chicago.

[12] Manuel Romero de Terreros, "El convento franciscano de Ozumba y las pinturas de su portería," *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas*, vol. VI, no. 24 (1956): 9-22.

[13] Several Mexican editions of *La mística ciudad de Dios* also pair the figures of Agreda and Scotus. Monique Gustin in *El Barroco en la Sierra Gorda* (Mexico: INAH, 1969), 195 and plate 10.

[14] She follows in the footsteps of the counter-reformation nun, Teresa de Avila, who felt a similar

missionary impulse. After hearing from Fray Alonso Maldonado of the missionary project in the Indies and the enormous numbers of Indians that had yet to be reached by the instruction of friars, the holy woman reports: 'I was so grief-stricken over the loss of so many souls that I couldn't contain myself. I went to a hermitage with many tears. I cried out to the Lord, begging Him that He give me the means to be able to do something to win some souls to His service...' *The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodríguez (Washington D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1985), vol. 3, 101-102. Yet, the saint's paranormal movements were restricted to levitation, whereas Maria de Agreda appeared in bodily form in two places simultaneously.

[15] Hermenegildo Vilaplana, *Historico y Sagrado Novenario de la Milagrosa Imagen de Nustra Señora del Pueblito* (Mexico: Biblioteca Mexicana, 1761), 10.

[16] Ibid, 49.

[17] In a 1743 report to the king, the *corregidor* Esteban Gómez de Acosta gives a brief description of the sanctuary and Marian sculpture at el Pueblito. *Querétaro en 1743. Informe presetado al rey por el corregidor Esteban Gómez de Acosta,* transcribed and edited by Mina Ramírez Montes (Querétaro: Talleres Gráficos del Gobierno del Estado, 1997), 140-141. Juan Antonio Oviedo adds a section on el Pueblito to Francisco de Florencia's *Zodiaco Mariano* (published in 1755). Florencia and Oviedo, *Zodiaco Mariano*, introduction by Antonio Rubial García (Mexico: Consejo Nacional Para La Cultura y Las Artes, 1995), 193-196.

[18] Rubens' young Balthazar Carlos (flanking the Virgin and saint) may have inspired the colonial artist to include the Santo Niño. In any case, the child's colonial inclusion is consistent with the eighteenth-century Catholic trend of freeing the infant from the Virgin's hands and transforming him into a child responsible for his own devotion (e.g. Santo Niño de Plateros from Fresnillo, Zacatecas). The rise of eighteenth and nineteenth-century devotions to the Christ Child in Mexico is most recently discussed in William Taylor, *Shrines and Miraculous Images: Religious Life in Mexico Before the Reforma* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2010), 177-179, 205.

[19] Manuel Romero de Terreros, *Grabados y Grabadores en la Nueva España* (Mexico City: Ediciones Arte Mexicano, 1948).

[20] The engraving is now in the Museum of New Mexico. Boyd first discusses it in "A New Mexican Retablo and It's Mexican Prototype," *El Palacio* 53 (1949): 353-357. In this early publication, she was apparently unaware of the Flemish sources for the Mexican design.

[21] Ibid. Boyd's 1949 article suggests that the artist was José Aragón. She makes no mention of other known paintings and prints, whether European or Latin American.

[22] [Verdadero retrato de la milagrosa imagen de Nuestra Señora del Pueblito que se venera en su Santuario extramuros de la ciudad de Querétaro.]

[23] Vilaplana's history was republished several times during the colonial period and as recently as 1954. Most of the editions include an engraving.

[24] Francisco Morales, O.F.M. "Mexican Society and the Franciscan Order in a Period of Transition, 1749-1859," *The Americas*, vol. 54, no. 3 (Jan., 1998): 325, fn. 3.

[25] William Taylor, *Magistrates of the Sacred: Priests and Parishioners in Eighteenth-Century Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 83.

[26] The episode is cited in Antonio Rubial García, *Santa María Tonantzintla: Un pueblo, un templo* (Mexico: Universidad Iberoamericana, 1991), 28.

[27] Mariano Cuevas, *Documentos inéditos del siglo XVI para la historia de México* (Mexico:

Museo Nacional de Arqueología, Historia y Etnología, 1914), 260-261.

[28] The issue was specifically addressed in the second chapter of the first council (1555): "We establish and order that neither priest, friar, nor cleric shall administer the sacrament of baptism to any adult without the person first being sufficiently instructed in our holy Catholic faith, and cleansed of (and examined on) idols and ancient rights…" Francisco Lorenzana, *Concilios provinciales* (Mexico: Hogal, 1769), 42-43. Translation is my own. The classic study on mendicant rivalries in New Spain is Robert Ricard's *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), originally published in French in 1933.

[29] On the late colonial Franciscan endorsement of shrines and images, see Serge Gruzinski, *Images at War: Mexico from Columbus to Bladerunner (1492-2019)* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

[30] Vilaplana, 15-16.

[31] It is a point missed by Boyd (1949), 355; Boyd (1974), 79-80.

[32] The recent study by John Tutino takes Vilaplana at his word, writing that from its creation in 1632, the icon "was the focus of everyday worship" and "claimed the devotion of the Otomi majority." Yet surely the dearth of seventeenth-century sources merits suspicion of the declaration. Tutino, *Making a New World: Founding Capitalism in the Bajío and Spanish North America* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 193.

[33] The best colonial source for the apostolic colleges in New Spain is friar Isidro Félix Espinosa, *Crónica de los Colegios de Propaganda Fide de la Nueva España* (Mexico: Joseph Bernardo de Hogal, 1746). A comprehensive study of the colleges and their functioning in Spanish America is found in Félix Saiz Diez, *Los Colegios de Propaganda Fide en Hispanoamérica* (Madrid: [s.n.], 1969). For the college in Querétaro and discussion of the congregation in general, see Michael B. McCloskey, O.F.M., *The Formative Years of the Missionary College of Santa Cruz of Querétaro 1683-1733* (Washington D.C.: American Academy of Franciscan History, 1955).

[34] From the Latin verb *instaurare*, the English 'instauration' implies a decay, lapse, or dilapidation of a previous system and the aspiration for renewal, renovation, or restoration to a former condition. That is, the word conveys equal investment in old and new, as well as past, present, and future.

[35] Fernando Cervantes notes the link between Querétaro's Propaganda Fide friars and the Devil's reappearance in New Spain, particularly in the bizarre series of female demonic possessions during the late seventeenth century. Cervantes, *Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 113.

[36] Margil de Jesús, the Apostle of Texas, left the missionary college he founded in Zacatecas and accompanied the Domingo Ramon expedition to Texas in 1716. Texas missions founded by the apostolic friars during the eighteenth century include Nuestra Señora de los Dolores (Ais), San Miguel de Linares (Adaes), Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe (Nacogdoches) and San José (along the San Antonio River).

[37] By the mid-eighteenth century, the Franciscan Order had established a monastery (Recollects) at the site of el Pueblito and oversaw the maintenance of the sanctuary.

[38] Francisco de Ajofrín, *Diario del viaje que por orden de la Sagrada Congregación de Propaganda Fide hizo a la América Septentrional en el siglo XVIII el padre fray Francisco de Ajofrin* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1958), vol. 1, 201.

[39] Francisco María Colombini, *Querétaro Triunfante en los Campos del Pueblito. Poema Histórico Sagrado en Cuatro Cantos de la Milagrosa Imagen de Nuestra Señora del Pueblito*

(Mexico, 1801), reprinted (Querétaro: Ediciones Cimatario, 1946); José María Zelaa e Hidalgo, *Glorias de Querétaro* (Mexico: Zúñiga y Ontiveros, 1803).

[40] Pedro Mendizabal, *Sermon que en el tercer dia del solemne novenario de Nuestra Señora del Pueblito conducida en secreto a la Iglesia del serafico patriarca San Francisco de Querétaro* (Mexico: Casa de Arizpe, 1810). For further comment on the royalist icon and the sermons that tout her, see Taylor, *Shrines*, 186-188.

[41] Miguel Bringas y Encinas, *Sermon que en la solemne función hecha por el Noble Cuerpo de Artilleros de la Ciudad de Querétaro, en Obsequio de su Portentosa Patrona y Generala María Santísima del Pueblito* (Mexico: Imprenta de Doña María Fernandez de Jauregui, 1811). The Virgin of el Pueblito was made a general by Royalist troops in 1810.

[42] For biographical sketch of the friar and his plans to revolt against an independent Mexico, see *Friar Bringas Reports to the King*, translated and ed. Daniel Matson and Bernard Fontana (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977). From the first days of the insurgency, the friars at the College of Querétaro aggravated Hidalgo, who vowed to raze the college and execute its inhabitants after the war. As it happened, Hidalgo was soon tried by the Inquisition, condemned by civil authorities, and executed by firing squad, no doubt to the delight of the *misioneros*.

[43] Traveling away from her sanctuary on a regular basis, the Virgin of el Pueblito resembles Remedios. Taylor, *Shrines*, 146-160; 188.

[44] Several of the nineteenth-century engravings and lithographs were published in Ignacio Frías y Camacho, *Semblanza y Realidad a Través de la Santísima Virgen del Pueblito* (Querétaro: [s.d.], 1997), 79-85. The urban backdrop becomes more pronounced once the Virgin is named a *patrona particular* by the congress of Querétaro in 1830.

[45] Such is the case with the retablos in the Paul Thiebaud collection and another belonging to Regis University.

[46] The hymn is published in Charles Carrillo and Thomas Steele, *A Century of Retablos: The Janis and Dennis Lyon Collection of New Mexican Santos, 1780-1880* (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 2007), 34. The authors also discuss Our Lady of la Manga (particularly the examples by Pedro Antonio Fresquís) as an advocate of childbirth and protector during plagues and periods of physical suffering.

[47] The episode and its approval by archbishop Lorenzana are described in José Manuel Rodriguez's *Relación jurídica de la libertad de la muerte intentada contra la persona del R.P.Fr. Andres Picazo* (Mexico: Phelipe de Zúñiga y Ontiveros, 1769). The publication includes an engraving by José Mariano Navarro. Colombini's (1801) verses also reference the miraculous event.

[48] Devotion to a local copy of the Pueblito icon rather than a "matrix" image is also the case for San Juanito de Escobedo, Jalisco.

[49] In Xochimilco, Saint Francis supports the Virgin of Tepepan; on the façade of the Ocotlan sanctuary and in a painting in Tecajic, the saint supports the Marian avocations named after these sites; and in a painting in the missionary college of Zacatecas, he supports the local Virgin of Guadalupe (a miraculous copy of the Tepeyac 'original').

[50] The Franciscan missions were secularized following independence. Little scholarship has dealt with the variegated appeal of Catholic imagery in the region during US Occupation. More than simply religious preference, Spanish Catholicism likely developed into a bastion of Hispanic identity in a culturally and politically fragmented landscape. Writing on the increased popularity of confraternities (Penitentes) in late nineteenth-century New Mexico, William

Wroth makes much the same point, suggesting that traditional values might have been conscientiously preserved and explored as modes of resistance to modernizing reforms and a general Anglo-American cultural assault. Wroth, *Images of Penance, Images of Mercy: Southwestern* Santos *in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), xv.